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DETAIL FROM KLAZOMENIAN SARCOPHAGUS

A KLAZOMENIAN SARCOPHAGUS

IN the little town of Klazomenai at the entrance to the Gulf of Smyrna there have been found from time to time painted terracotta sarcophagi dating mostly from the sixth century B. C. Twenty years ago the list of recorded examples was a meagre one of twenty-odd. In 1913 it had increased to about seventy. And quite recently the actual cemetery in which these sarcophagi were buried has been located and scientific excavations have been begun, so that we may expect a considerable increase in the supply. This is fortunate; for the importance of these monuments is considerable, not only on account of their intrinsic beauty and interest, but because of what they can teach us of the contemporary Greek paintings which have disappeared. Being on a fairly large scale they naturally can give us a better idea of full-size compositions than the terracotta vases—our only other contemporary Greek painted objects.

By a happy chance the Metropolitan Museum has been able to acquire an excellent specimen of such a Klazomenian sarcophagus (page 217) which was recently offered for sale in New York. It is the second example in this country, the only other one being in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Its dimensions—length $7\frac{5}{8}$ ft. (215.3 cm.); width at head $36\frac{1}{4}$ in. (92 cm.); width at base $29\frac{1}{2}$ in. (75.4 cm.)—show that it was used for the burial of an adult. Only the decorated rim has been preserved, the actual coffin having evidently been broken away purposely, as too heavy and costly for transit—a usual device, to judge by the condition of a number of other examples. As in the majority of cases, so also in ours

the head is considerably broader than the foot, the sides converging from the top to the bottom. The decoration is also of the accepted type—a scene of battle with chariots and fighting warriors at the head; at the foot animals; on the sides a guilloche pattern with a panel above and below of a centaur and a siren; in subordinate fields decorative patterns and friezes of animals or monsters. The whole forms an effective decoration with variety and interest and a pleasing distribution of darks and lights.

The battle scene at the top is, of course, the one in which our chief interest centers. Unfortunately it is the least well preserved, since several pieces are missing and the surface is in poor condition. Moreover, the crowded composition (eleven figures and four horses in a space of $36\frac{1}{8}$ by $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches) makes it rather confused. But we can make out a central group of two combatants with a fallen warrior between them, flanked on each side by a chariot into which a warrior is about to step. A charioteer—represented smaller than the other figures since there is less available space—is guiding the horses, which are rearing and are attended by a warrior facing them. Still another warrior is walking by the side of each chariot. The curious stands beneath the horses' legs are best interpreted as tripods with bowls, a common prize in chariot races. Perhaps we have here funerary games¹ and contests such as we read of in Homer and such as we find represented, in much cruder fashion, on the larger Dipylon vases. Homeric subjects are indeed popular on these sarcophagi. The closest parallel to our scene is found on another Klazomenian sarcophagus, published by Picara

¹For this interpretation see also Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports & Festivals*, p. 21.

and Plassart in the *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, 1913, pl. X, where the same general composition occurs but with winged horses and winged figures as charioteers. The single groups of warriors mounting their chariots and two warriors fighting with a wounded warrior between them are very common on the sarcophagi, and also, of course, on contemporary vase paintings. The only unusual feature in our scene is the "tripod stands," which are important since they suggest the interpretation of funerary games. As an evidently typical composition of the time, full of life and action, it can help us to visualize the Ionian paintings we read of in literature—such as "Dareios watching his army cross the Bosphoros" by Mandrokles of Samos or "the battle of the Greek ships" by Kalliphon of Samos—ambitious subjects for primitive artists and probably treated in similar fashion to the picture on our sarcophagus.

The three animals at the bottom (see page 215), a boar between two lions, are so usual a design that they occur as a "repeat" on a much narrower frieze on the sarcophagus just referred to. But in our picture they are very carefully and beautifully painted; and fortunately also well preserved, so that artistically they form the most attractive part of the decoration. Very charming also are the two sirens at the bottom of the guilloche bands. In the field of these, as well as in that of the three animals, are a variety of "ground" ornaments introduced as fillers—a practice we often encounter in archaic vase paintings.

The sarcophagus is made of coarse red clay covered with a finer red slip on which is applied a white engobe. On this white engobe the designs are painted in brownish black glaze, the upper portion entirely in silhouette, with superimposed white here and there, the lower with some outline drawing and details "reserved" in the color of the background. The technique is the same, therefore, as that on the Rhodian vases of the seventh century B. C. and generally on earlier Ionian pottery. The connection with Rhodes was probably particularly close since we know of several "Klazomenian" sarcophagi having actually

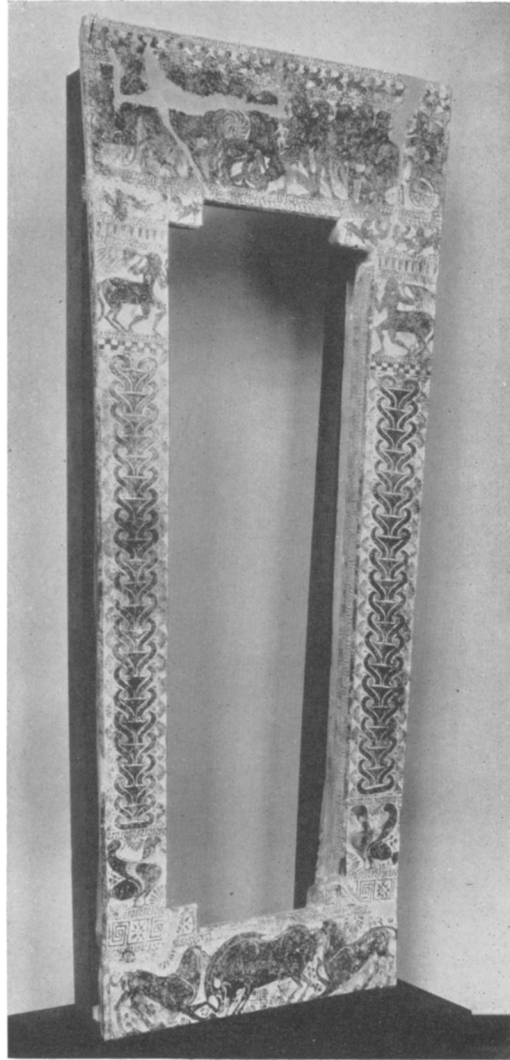
been found there. But that the chief center of manufacture of the sarcophagi was Klazomenai has always been surmised since the majority came from there and has now received substantiation through the location of the actual cemetery. The question of chronology and many other debated points will probably be considerably cleared up by the scientific excavations now in progress.

Our new sarcophagus has been placed in the Third Room of the Classical Wing with the other sixth-century material. It has been set up vertically instead of horizontally both to economize space and because the decoration undoubtedly can be seen better that way. It is interesting in this connection to recall a theory of Meurer (*Jahrbuch d. Arch. Inst.* 1902, pp. 65ff.) to the effect that the sarcophagi were originally designed to be shown upright—the decorated rim serving as a frame round a bandaged corpse in the funerary rites. Meurer based his surmise on the flat undecorated lower face as against the curving decorated faces of the sides and the curving but undecorated face of the top—a combination certainly only satisfactorily explained by a vertical position. He compares a similar Egyptian practice. This would apply only to the trapezoid sarcophagi like ours, not to the rectangular ones with covers such as the magnificent example in the British Museum.

G. M. A. R.

FRENCH LITHOGRAPHS

DURING the last summer the Museum acquired for its Print Room a group of French lithographs of the nineteenth century, a subject in which its collections had hitherto been notably deficient. While the new accessions are not many, considering the vast body of lithographs made in France during that time, they contain a fair number of those which have, by more or less common consent, come to be regarded as among the most important from the artistic and historical points of view. A description of the contents of this little collection would, within the space at command, be necessarily little more than a



KLAZOMENIAN SARCOPHAGUS